A SERMON

Concerning the

Excellency and Uſefulneſs OF THE Common-Prayer.

Preach'd by *William Beveridge*, D. D. (late Lord Biſhop of St. *Aſaph*) at the Opening of the Pariſh-Church of St. *Peter's Cornhill*, *London*, the 27th of *November*, 1681.

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144.
4. 2.
123.

To the Right Reverend Father in God, *Henry* Lord Bishop of *London*, one of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council.

My Lord,

YOUR *Lordship having signified your Pleasure, that the* Sermon *which you heard, when You did us the Honour to be present at the Opening of our Parish-Church, should be made publick; notwithstanding my Averseness to Print any thing in English; yet out of a just Sense both of that Obedience which I owe to You as my Bishop, and of that Kindness which I have received from You as my Patron, I have now done it, and herewith make bold to*

preſent it to You. What Effect a Diſcourſe of this Nature will have upon the Minds of thoſe who ſhould have ſo much Patience as to read it, I know not; but muſt leave that to him who hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hand. My Subject I am ſure is good and neceſſary: And as for my plain and practical way of handling it, it is that which my Text requireth, in that it commandeth, that in our Chriſtian Congregations, All Things be done to Edifying. *So that unleſs I had endeavoured to ſuit it to the Capacities of all there preſent, and to make it as Edifying as I could unto them, my Sermon had been a Contradiction to my Text: And beſides that, I had loſt my Deſign in Preaching it: Which was, to convince thoſe eſpecially, whoſe Souls, under your Lordſhip, are committed to my Care and Conduct, of the* Excellency and Uſefulneſs of the Common-Prayer, *and ſo to perſwade them to the conſtant and conſcientious Uſe of it; not only becauſe it is conformable to the Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Practice of the Univerſal Church, nor only becauſe it is eſtabliſhed by the Laws both of our Church and State (though they alſo be very great Reaſons) but likewiſe becauſe of*

that

that Extraordinary Benefit and Advantage which they would receive from it, for the Edifying of their Souls in whatſoever is neceſſary to their Eternal Salvation.

I am very ſenſible, that much more might have been ſaid upon this Excellent Subject; but intending no more than a plain Sermon upon the Occaſion, I was forced to omit many things, and to confine my ſelf to ſuch only, which were moſt obvious, and ſeemed the moſt neceſſary for People to know and practice, in order to their being reconciled unto, and Edified by our Publick Prayers. And if upon Your peruſal of that little which I have ſaid, You ſhall find any thing not agreeable to the Doctrine of our Church, I humbly ſubmit it to Your Lordſhip's Judgment and Cenſure; only deſiring that You would be as ready to pardon, as I am to retract it.

My Lord,

I have one Requeſt more to make unto You, which is, that as You was the Occaſion of my Printing this Sermon, ſo You would be pleaſed to accept of it now it is Printed: And if, by the Bleſſing of Almighty God, it may contribute any thing to thoſe great Ends,

which You continually prosecute with so great Wisdom and Prudence, with such exemplary Care and Diligence in the Management of that High Office which he hath called You to, even to the Glory of his great Name, the Good of his Church, and the Salvation of the Souls of Men, it is all that is desired by,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most Humble,

and most Obedient Servant,

William Beveridge.

1 COR. xiv. 26.

Let all Things be done to Edifying.

WHEN *Judas Maccabeus* had new built the Altar, and repaired the Temple at *Jerusalem*, after it had been polluted and laid waste for Three Years together; the Church of God at that time and place rejoyced so much at it, that they kept the Dedication of it Eight Days, and ordered that the same should be observed every Year, 1 *Mac.* 4. 59. And so we find it was in our Saviour's time; for he himself was pleased to honour that Festival, though only of Ecclesiastical Institution, with his own Presence, *John* 10. 22. In the like manner, we of this Parish have Cause to be transported with Joy and Gladness, and to spend this Day in praising and adoring the most High God, for that our Church which hath lain waste for above five times Three Years, is now at last rebuilt and fitted again, for his Worship and Service. For what the Altar and Temple were unto the Jews then, the same will our Church be unto us now. Did they there offer up their Sacrifices unto God, as Types of the Death of Christ? We shall here Commemorate the said Death of Christ, typified by those Sacrifices. Did they come from all parts of *Judea* to Worship God there? So shall we, I hope, come from all parts of this Parish to Worship God here. Was the

Temple an Houſe of Prayer to them? So is this Church to us. Was that the place where God, according to his Promiſe, came unto his People to bleſs them? I do not doubt but he will do the ſame to us in this place, if we come unto it, and carry our ſelves in it as we ought to do. In ſhort, was the Temple the place where all things were performed, that could any way conduce to the Edifying of God's People, as things then ſtood? The ſame may be ſaid of our Church, as things now ſtand. For whatſoever is, or can be, Neceſſary to the Edifying of our Souls here, and ſo to their Eternal Salvation hereafter, is clearly and fully comprehended in thoſe ſeveral Offices, which according to the Laws of the Land, are now to be performed in this place. Neither is there any Thing contained in any of them, but what doth really conduce to theſe great Ends and Purpoſes.

But this being a thing which is denied by ſome, and underſtood but by few amongſt us, I ſhall endeavour to explain and demonſtrate unto all. Which I chuſe to do at this time, becauſe it is the moſt proper Subject I could think of for this Occaſion. For unleſs what is to be now done in this place, will anſwer the Ends wherefore it is erected, all the Coſts and Charges that have been laid out upon it, will be to no purpoſe at all. But if it can be fully made out, That the Service which is here to be performed, doth highly conduce to the advancement of God's Glory and your Happineſs, the great End wherefore ſuch places are erected, then you cannot but acknowledge, that whatſoever any of you have contributed towards it, is the beſt Money that ever you ſpent; and that this day, wherein the ſaid Service is begun to be performed in it, is one of the moſt joyful days that this Pariſh ever ſaw.

This

This therefore is that which I ſhall endeavour to prove at this time: And for that end I have choſen theſe Words for the Ground and Foundation of all that I ſhall ſay upon this Subject. *Let all Things be done to Edifying.* For the right underſtanding whereof we muſt know, that the Apoſtle having in this Chapter diſcourſed at large concerning the way and manner of holding Chriſtian Aſſemblies, and having proved, that whatſoever is there ſaid, ought to be ſpoken in ſuch a Language, that all there preſent may underſtand, and ſo be edified by it; he at laſt ſums up the whole in this Propoſition; *How is it then Brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a Pſalm, hath a Doctrine, hath a Tongue, hath a Revelation, hath an Interpretation: Let all Things be done unto Edifying:* As if he ſhould have ſaid, Whatſoever Gifts any of you have, or pretend to, yet when you meet together upon a Religious Account, for the Publick Worſhip of God, take ſpecial care that all Things be there done, to the Edifying of all who are there perſent. From whence it is plain, that the Apoſtle lays down this as a general Rule, neceſſary to be obſerved in all Chriſtian Congregations. So that whenſoever we meet together to Worſhip and Serve God, if any thing be there done which is not for our Edification, we come ſhort of this Rule, and ſo we do too, if any thing be there wanting that may conduce to that end. For according to this Rule, as nothing is to be there done, but what is for our Edifying, ſo alſo on the other ſide all Things that are, or can be, for our Edifying, ought to be there done.

But for our better underſtanding the true Senſe and Purport of this Rule, it is neceſſary to conſider what the Apoſtle here means by *Edifying*: For

For which we must know, That all Christians being, as the same Apostle saith, *of the Houshold of God, built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone*, Eph. 2. 19, 20. Hence whatsoever tends to the Strengthning, Supporting, Cementing, or Raising this Fabrick higher, whatsoever it is whereby Men are made more firm and solid Christians, more Holy and Perfect Men than they were before, by that they are said to be *Edified*. And therefore, it is a great mistake for Men to think, as many do, that they are *Edified* by what they hear, merely because they know perhaps some little thing which before they were ignorant of. For *Knowledge* (as the Apostle saith) *puffeth up*, it is *Charity that Edifieth*, 2 Cor. 8. 1. And therefore, whatsoever Knowledge we attain to, we cannot be said to be *Edified* by it any further than as it influences our Minds, excites our Love, and inclines our Hearts to God and Goodness. And that this is the true Notion of *Edifying*, is plain from the Apostle's own words, where he saith, *Let no corrupt Communication come out of your Mouths, but that which is for the use of Edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers*, Eph. 4. 29. For from hence it is manifest, that that only is properly said to *Edifie*, that ministers Grace unto us; whereby we are made more Pure and Holy than we were before. And therefore, we read of *Edifying our selves in Love*, Eph. 4. 16. *and building up our selves in our most holy Faith*, Jude 20. which are the two Graces that make up a real and true Christian. And nothing can be said to *Edifie*, but what tends to the exciting and increasing of them: *Until we come* (as the Apostle saith) *in the Unity of the Faith*,

and

and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the Fulness of Christ, Eph. 4. 12, 13. Hence therefore, when the Apostle saith, *Let all things be done to Edifying*, his meaning in brief is this, That in all our Christian Assemblies, when we meet together to worship and serve God, all Things there are to be so done, that we may return home wiser, and better than we came thither; with our Knowledge of God and Christ increased, our Desires inlarged, our Love inflamed, our Faith confirmed, all our Graces quickned, and so our whole Souls made more Humble, more Holy, more like to God, than they were before.

The Words being thus briefly explained, I shall now apply them to our present purpose, and shew that that Form of Religious Worship, which is prescribed by our Church, established by the Lawe of the Land, and therefore to be used now in this place, agrees exactly with this Rule, or Canon of the Holy Apostle, even that *all things in it are done to Edifying*.

But before we prove that that Form in particular, which our Church hath prescribed, is agreeable to this Apostolical Rule, it is necessary to prove first, That the prescribing a Form in general is so. For unless the prescribing a Form in general, be according to this Rule, no Form in particular, that is prescribed, can possibly agree with it. But now that this Rule, admits, yea, requires the prescribing of some Form, is evident from the Rule it self. For the Apostle here commands the Church of *Corinth*, and so all Provincial Churches, to take care that in their Religious Assemblies *all Things be done to Edifying*. But how is it possible for any Provincial Church to see that this be done, except she

ſhe preſcribes ſome certain Form for the doing of it? If every Miniſter of a Pariſh ſhould be left to his own liberty, to do what he pleaſed in his own Congregation, although ſome perhaps might be ſo wiſe and prudent as to obſerve this Rule, as well as they could, yet conſidering the Corruption of Human Nature, we have much cauſe to fear that others would not. At leaſt the Church could be no way ſecured that all would; and therefore muſt needs be obliged to conſider of, and appoint ſome ſuch Form to be uſed in all her Congregations, by which ſhe may be fully aſſured, that this Apoſtolical Rule is every where obſerved, as it ought to be. And although we ſhould ſuppoſe what can never be expected, that all the Clergy in every Province ſhould be as wiſe and as good as they ought to be, yet it cannot be ſuppoſed that every one of them ſhould underſtand what is for the Edification of the People, as well as all together. And therefore it muſt needs be acknowledged, that the ſureſt way to have this Rule obſerved, is, for the Governours of every Church, and the whole Clergy, to meet together by their Repreſentatives in a Synod or Convocation, and there, upon mature Deliberation, agree upon ſome ſuch Form, which they in their Prudence and Conſciences judge to be according to this Rule, which the Apoſtle here lays down before them.

And beſides that, the preſcribing a Form in general, is more for our *Edifying*, than to leave every one to do what ſeems good in his own Eyes. We have the concurrent Teſtimony, Experience, and Practice of the Univerſal Church. For we never read or heard of any Church in the World, from the Apoſtles days to ours, but what took this courſe. Though all have not uſed the ſame, yet no Church

but

but have uſed ſome Form or other. And therefore for any Man to ſay, that it is not Lawful, or not Expedient, or not ſo Edifying, to uſe a Form of Prayer in the Publick Worſhip of God, is to contradict the general ſenſe of Chriſtianity, to condemn the Holy Catholick Church; and to make himſelf wiſer than all Chriſtians that ever were before him. Which, whatſoever it may be thought now, was always heretofore reckoned one of the greateſt Sins and Follies that a Man could be guilty of.

Nay, more than all this too: For this is not only to make a Man's ſelf wiſer than all Chriſtians, but wiſer than Chriſt himſelf: For it is impoſſible to preſcribe any Form of Prayer in more plain and expreſs Terms than he hath done it, where he ſaith, *When ye Pray, ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven* &c. *Luke* 11. 2. And I hope none here preſent but will acknowledge that Chriſt, by whom alone we can be edified, knows better what is, or what is not for our Edification, than we, or all the Men in the World can do. And therefore ſeeing he hath not only preſcribed a Form of Prayer for his Diſciples to uſe, but hath expreſly commanded them to uſe it, we, who profeſs our ſelves to be his Diſciples, ought to reſt fully ſatisfied in our Minds, that uſing of a Form of Prayer is not only Lawful, but much more for our Edifying, than it is poſſible for any other way of Praying to be.

The ſame may be proved alſo from the Nature of the thing it ſelf, by ſuch Arguments, which do not only demonſtrate that it is ſo, but likewiſe ſhew how it comes to be ſo. For Firſt, In order to our being edified, ſo as to be made better and holier, whenſoever we meet together upon a Religious account, it is neceſſary that the ſame good and holy Things be always inculcated and preſſed upon us after

after one and the ſame manner. For we cannot but all find by our own Experience, how difficult it is to faſten any thing that is truly good, either upon our ſelves or others, and that it is rarely, if ever effected, without frequent Repetitions of it. What ſoever good things we hear only once, or now and then, though perhaps upon the hearing of them, they may ſwim for a while in our Brains, yet they ſeldom ſink down into our Hearts, ſo as to move and ſway the Affections, as it is neceſſary they ſhould do, in order to our being edified by them. Whereas, by a Set Form of Publick Devotions rightly compoſed, as we are continually put in mind of all things neceſſary for us to know or do, ſo that is always done by the ſame Words and Expreſſions, which by their conſtant uſe will imprint the things themſelves ſo firmly in our Minds, that it will be no eaſie matter to obliterate or raze them out; but do what we can they will ſtill occur upon all occaſions; which cannot but be very much for our Chriſtian Edification.

Moreover, That which conduceth to the quickning our Souls, and to the raiſing up our Affections in our publick Devotions, muſt needs be acknowledged to conduce much to our Edification. But it is plain, That as to ſuch purpoſes, a Set Form of Prayer is an extraordinary help to us; for if I hear another Pray, and know not before-hand what he will ſay, I muſt firſt liſten to what he will ſay next; then I am to conſider, whether what he ſaith be agreeable to ſound Doctrine, and whether it be proper and lawful for me to joyn with him in the Petitions he puts up to God Almighty; and if I think it is ſo, then I am to do it. But before I can well do that, he is got to another thing: By which means it is very difficult, if not Morally impoſſible,

to

to joyn with him in every thing ſo regularly as I ought to do. But by a Set Form of Prayer all this trouble is prevented; for having the Form continually in my mind, being throughly acquainted with it, fully approving of every thing in it, and always knowing before hand what will come next, I have nothing elſe do to, whilſt the Words are ſounding in mine Ears, but to move my Heart and Affections ſuitably to them, to raiſe up my Deſires of thoſe good things which are prayed for, to fix my Mind wholly upon God, whilſt I am praiſing of him, and ſo to employ, quicken, and lift up my whole Soul in performing my Devotions to him. No Man that hath been accuſtomed to a Set Form for any conſiderable time, but may eaſily find this to be true by his own Experience: And by conſequence, That this way of Praying is a greater help to us, than they can imagine that never made tryal of it.

To this may be alſo added, That if we hear another praying a Prayer of his own private Compoſition or voluntary Effuſion, our Minds are wholly bound up and confined to his Words and Expreſſions, and to his Requeſts and Petitions, be they what they will: ſo that at the beſt we can but pray his Prayer. Whereas when we pray by a Form preſcribed by the Church, we pray the Prayers of the whole Church we live in, which are common to the Miniſter and People, to our ſelves, and to all the Members of the ſame Church: So that we have all the devout and pious Souls that are in it, concurring and joining with us in them: which cannot ſurely but be more effectual for the Edifying not only of our ſelves in particular, but of the Church in general, than any private Prayer can be.

Laſtly, in order to our being edified by our publick

lick Devotions, as it is neceſſary that we know before-hand what we are to pray for, ſo it is neceſſary that we afterwards know what we have prayed for, when we have done: For I ſuppoſe you will all grant, that all the good and benefit we can receive from our Prayers, is to be ultimately reſolved into God's gracious hearing, and anſwering of them: Without which they will all come to nothing. But there are two things required to the obtaining an Anſwer of our Prayers: Firſt, That we ſincerely and earneſtly deſire good things at the Hands of God, to which, as I have ſhewn, a Set Form of Prayer conduceth very much: And then, Secondly, It is required alſo, that we truſt and depend upon God for his granting of them, according to the Promiſes which he hath made unto us in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. And I verily believe, that one great Reaſon why Men pray ſo often to no purpoſe, is, becauſe they do not take this courſe: But when they have done their Prayers, they have done with them, and concern themſelves no more about them, than as if they had never prayed at all. But how can we expect that God ſhould anſwer our Prayers, when we our ſelves do not mind whether he anſwers them or no? Nor believe and truſt upon him for it? For certainly truſting in God, as it is one of the higheſt Acts of Religion that we can perform, ſo it is that which gives Life and Vigour, Vertue and Efficacy to our Prayers, without which we have no ground at all to expect they ſhould be anſwered: For God having promiſed to anſwer our Prayers, except we truſt on him for his performance of ſuch Promiſes, we loſe the Benefit of them, and by conſequence our Prayers too. And therefore, as ever we deſire that he ſhould grant us what we pray for, when we have

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directed our Prayers to him, we muſt ſtill *look up*, *Pſal.* 5. 3. expecting and hoping for the return of them.

Now as this is a thing of greater conſequence, ſo a Set Form of Prayer is a greater help to us in it, than it is commonly thought to be. For if we hear another utter a Prayer *ex tempore*, which he never ſaid, nor we heard before, nor ever ſhall do it again, it is much if he himſelf can remember the tenth part of what he ſaid: How much leſs can we that heard him, do it? And if we cannot poſſibly remember what we prayed for, How is it poſſible for us to expect it at the Hands of God? or to depend upon him for it? But now it is quite otherwiſe when we uſe a Set Form of Prayer: For by this means, when we have prayed, we can recollect our ſelves, look over our Prayers again, either in a Book, or in our Minds, where they are imprinted; we can conſider diſtinctly what we have asked at the Hands of God, and ſo act our Faith and Confidence on him, for the granting every Petition we have put up unto him, according to the Promiſes which he hath made us to that purpoſe. And as this is the ſureſt way whereby to obtain what we pray for, it muſt needs be the moſt Edifying way of Praying that we can poſſibly uſe.

Theſe Things being duly weighed, I ſhall now take it for granted, That the uſing a Form in general in the publick Worſhip of God, is agreeable to this Apoſtolical Rule, *Let all Things be done to Edifying*; and ſo ſhall proceed to ſhew, That that Form in particular, which our Church hath appointed to be uſed upon ſuch Occaſions, is ſo too. For which end it is not neceſſary that I ſhould run through every particular Word, Phraſe or Expreſſion in the *Common-Prayer*, much leſs that I

ſhould vindicate and defend it from every little Exception, that Ignorance and Malice may make againſt ſomething in it. For nothing ever yet was, or can be ſaid or written, but ſomething or other may be ſaid or written againſt it, either well or ill. But my Buſineſs muſt be to prove, That the Form of Divine Service contained in the Book of *Common-Prayer*, which is now uſed in the Church of *England*, conduceth ſo much to the Edifying thoſe that uſe it, that it agrees exactly to the Rule which the Apoſtle here preſcribes in that caſe. And this I ſhall demonſtrate from four Heads. 1. *From the Language.* 2. *From the Matter, or Subſtance of it.* 3. *From the Method.* And 4. *From the Manner of Performing it.* For if it be Edifying in all theſe Reſpects, it muſt needs be acknowledged to be ſo in the whole. There being nothing in it but what may be reduced to ſome of theſe Heads.

Firſt, Therefore as to the *Language*, you all know that the whole Service is performed in *Engliſh*, the Vulgar and the common Language of the Nation, which every one underſtands, and ſo may be Edified by it. And this, indeed, is the Ground and Foundation of all the Benefits that we can poſſibly receive from our publick Prayers. And therefore in the Church of *Rome*, the common People are made uncapable of being Edified by the Prayers of the Church, in that they are all made in Latin, a Language which they do not underſtand. So that when they meet to worſhip God, there are ſeldom any in the Congregation that knows what is ſaid there, except the Prieſt that reads it, and oftentimes not he neither. By which means they have no ſuch thing really amongſt them as *Common-Prayer*. Neither is it poſſible

poſſible for the common People to be ever Edified by what is there ſaid, or done, except they could be once convinced by it of the horrible abuſe which their Church puts upon them, in commanding all her publick Devotions to be performed in an unknown Tongue, directly contrary not only to the Rule in my Text, but to the Deſign of this whole Chapter.

But bleſſed be God for it, it is not ſo with us. For ours is truly *Common Prayer*; for it is written and read in that Language which is *common* to all the Congregations in the Kingdom, and to every Perſon in each Congregation. So that all the People of the Land, whatſoever Rank or Condition they are of may joyn together in the uſe of every thing that is in it, and ſo be jointly Edified by it: Eſpecially, conſidering that it is not only all in Engliſh, but in common and plain Engliſh, ſuch as we uſe in our common Diſcourſe with one another. There are no unuſual or obſolete Words, no hard or uncouth Phraſes in it, but every thing is expreſſed as clearly and plainly as Words can do it. So that the meaneſt Perſon in the Congregation, that underſtands but his Mother-Tongue, may be Edified by it, as well as the greateſt Scholar.

But that which is chiefly to be conſidered in the Language of the *Common-Prayer*, is, that it is not only *common* but *proper* too. Though the Words there uſed are but common Words, yet they are ſo uſed, that they *properly* expreſs the things that are deſigned by them. This, I confeſs, may ſeem to be no great matter at firſt ſight, yet it is that without which we might be ſubverted, by that which was intended for our Edification. For impropriety of Speech in Matters of Religion,

hath given occasion to all, or most of the Schisms, Errors and Heresies, that ever infested this, or any other Church, as might easily be demonstrated. Hence the Apostle gave *Timothy*, *A Form of sound Words*, and charged him to hold it fast: *Hold fast* (saith he) *the Form of sound Words which thou hast heard of me*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. As knowing that except the Words, whereby he usually expressed Divine Truths, were sound and proper, it would be impossible for his Notions and Opinions of the Things themselves to be so. And certainly, if ever there was *A Form of sound Words*, composed by Men since the Apostles times, our *Common-Prayer* may justly deserve that Title; it being all made up of such fit and proper, such sound and wholesome Words, and if we do but hold fast to them, there is no fear of our falling, either into Heresie, or Schism. For they being duly considered, will suggest to our Minds, right and true Apprehensions of all the Articles of our Christian Religion, and so not only make us sound, but build us up strong and firm in our most Holy Faith: So that considering the plainness and perspicuity, the soundness and propriety of Speech which is used in it, the least that can be said of the *Common-prayer*, is, that all Things in it are so worded, as is most for the Edifying of all those that use it.

And as the Words in the *Common Prayer* are all as Edifying as Words can be, so in the second place, is the *Matter* expressed by those Words. For there is nothing in it, but what is necessary for our Edification, and all things that are, or can be for our Edification, are plainly in it. First, I say there is nothing in our Liturgy but what is necessary for our Edification. There are no such *Fables* in it,

or

or *Endleſs Genealogies*, which (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *Miniſter Queſtions, rather than Godly Edifying, which is in Faith*, 1 Tim. 1. 4. There are none of thoſe vain Diſputations, and impertinent Controverſies, which have of late been raiſed in the Church, to its great Diſturbance, rather than its Edification. There are no new Opinions, nor airy Speculations in it, which ſerve only to tickle Mens Ears, and pleaſe their Fancies, and ſo divert their Thoughts from what they are about. Look it all over without Prejudice and Partiality, conſider ſeriouſly every thing that is in it, and you will find nothing aſſerted, but what is conſonant to God's Word, nothing prayed for, but according to his Promiſe, nothing required as a Duty, but what is agreeable to his Commands, nothing ſaid or done, but what is grave and ſober, ſolemn and ſubſtantial; nothing but what becomes the Worſhip of our Great and Almighty Creator. And therefore, nothing but what we may ſome way or other be Edified by it.

And as there is nothing it it, but what is Edifying, ſo all Things that are or can be Edifying, are in it. For nothing can be neceſſary to Edifie, and make us ſolid and perfect Chriſtians, but what is neceſſary either to be *believed*, or *done*, or elſe *obtained* by us. But there is nothing neceſſary to be *known* or *believed*, but we are taught it; nothing neceſſary to be *done*, but we are enjoined in it; nothing neceſſary to be *obtained*, but we pray for it in our publick Form of Divine Service.

For firſt, As to thoſe things which are neceſſary to be *known*, or *believed*, it is acknowledged by all Proteſtants, that they are fully contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, which make a great, if not the greateſt part of our Divine Service; and are conſtantly read over, the *Pſalms* once every Month, the

the *Old Teſtament* once, and the *New* thrice every Year. And all the Fundamental Articles of our Chriſtian Faith, revealed in the Holy Scriptures, being briefly ſummed up in the *Apoſtles Creed*; that we may be ſure to keep them always in our Minds, we have that Creed read, and repeated always once, and moſt commonly twice every day in the Year. And ſeeing the Godhead of our Bleſſed Saviour, the Foundation of our whole Religion, hath been, and ſtill is denied by ſome, leſt we ſhould be led away with the Error of the Wicked, every Sunday, and Holy-day, we read the *Nicene Creed*, wherein the Godhead both of the Son and Holy Ghoſt is aſſerted and explained. And that we may not entertain any Erroneous Opinions concerning the moſt Holy Trinity, or the Incarnation of the Son of God, but the true Catholick Faith whole, and undefiled, upon certain days every Year, we read that which is commonly called, *The Creed of St.* Athanaſius, wherein thoſe great Myſteries are unfolded; in the moſt proper and perſpicuous terms that they are capable of.

And as all things neceſſary to be believed, are ſummarily contained in the *Three Creeds*, ſo they are frequently explained in the other parts of our Liturgy; In ſo much, that it would be eaſie to frame a compleat Body of Divinity out of the Words there uſed: At leaſt of all ſuch things as are needful for any Man in the World to believe or know, in order to his Eternal Salvation.

The ſame may be ſaid alſo of all thoſe things which we ought to do: For, as we here do whatſoever is neceſſary to be done, in order to our Worſhip of God in this place, ſo we here are taught whatſoever is neceſſary to be learnt, in order to our

our ſerving God in all other places. So that no Man that frequents our publick Congregations, where the *Common-Prayer* is uſed, can ever plead Ignorance of any one Duty whatſoever: For if it be not his own Fault, he may there be inſtructed in every thing which he that made him requires of him. For here, as I obſerved before, we conſtantly read the Holy Scripture, which, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly inſtructed unto all good Works*, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. And ſeeing it hath pleaſed the moſt High God to compriſe his whole Will, and by conſequence our Duty, in the *Ten Commandments*, hence we read them conſtantly every Sunday and Holy-day throughout the whole Year: By which means every one, that doth not wilfully ſhut his Eyes, may clearly ſee, and fully underſtand, his whole Duty both to God and Man. Eſpecially conſidering that in your Prayers themſelves alſo there is frequent mention made of all thoſe Vices which ought to be avoided, and of all thoſe good Works which ought to be performed by us. So that we can never come to Church, but we are ſtill put in mind, both of *what we ought*, and *what we ought not* to do, that we may be ſaved.

And then, as there is nothing neceſſary to be *known*, or *done*, but we are taught it; ſo neither is there any thing neceſſary to be *obtained*, to make us either Holy, or Happy, but we pray for it in the *Common-Prayer*. For here we have the *Lord's Prayer*, a Prayer compoſed by Wiſdom it ſelf; and therefore it muſt needs be the moſt perfect and Divine Prayer that ever was made. Neither do we uſe it only once, but in every diſtinct

ſtinct Service of the Church, in our Prayers before we read the Holy Scripture, and in our Prayers after; towards the end of the Litany, and in the beginning of the Communion Service, and in every Office of the Church beſides. And the reaſon is, becauſe although our Saviour hath not forbidden us to uſe any other Prayer, yet he hath expreſly commanded us to ſay this, whenſoever we pray. And therefore, in obedience to his Command, our Church hath wiſely ordered, that in all, and in every Solemn Addreſs that we make to the moſt High God, we always ſay this Prayer, leſt otherwiſe, by our Tranſgreſſion of his Command, in omitting this, we make all our other Prayers to be ineffectual. And beſides, by the conſtant uſe of this amongſt our other Prayers, we are always ſure to uſe one Prayer, both abſolutely perfect in it ſelf, and moſt acceptable unto him, to whom we pray; it being a Prayer of his own Compoſure: So that we ſpeak unto God in his own Words, and ſo may be confident, that we aſk nothing of him, but exactly according to his own Will.

And though all things neccſſary for us be virtually contained in the *Lord's Prayer*, yet our Church, in Conformity to the Catholick and Apoſtolical, hath thought good to add ſome other Prayers, in which the ſame things are more parcularly expreſſed and deſired, at the hands of our great and moſt Bountiful Benefactor. All which are ſo contrived, that there is nothing Evil, or Hurtful for us, but we pray againſt it; nothing Good, or Uſeful, but we pray for it. There is no Vice, or Luſt, but we deſire it may be ſubdued under us: No Grace or Vertue, but we pray it may be planted and grow in us. Inſomuch, that

that if we do but conſtantly and ſincerely pray over all thoſe Prayers, and ſtedfaſtly believe and truſt in God for his anſwering of them, and ſo obtain what we there pray for, we cannot but be as real and true Saints, as happy and bleſſed Creatures, as it is poſſible for us to be in this World. Neither do we here pray for our ſelves only, but according to the Apoſtle's Advice, we make *Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of thanks for all Men*; yea, *for our very Enemies*, as our Saviour hath commanded us, *Mat.* 5. 44. And what can be deſired more than all this, to make the Matter of the *Common-Prayer* Edifying either to our ſelves or others? Nothing certainly, but Truth and Sincerity of Heart in the uſing of it.

I cannot paſs from this Head, before I have obſerved one thing more unto you, concerning the Prayers in general, and that is, That they are not carried on in one continued Diſcourſe, but divided into many ſhort Prayers, or Collects, ſuch as that is which our Lord himſelf compoſed; and that might be one Reaſon, wherefore our Church ſo ordered it, that ſo ſhe might follow our Lord's Example in it, who beſt knew what kind of Prayers were fitteſt for us to uſe. And indeed, we cannot but all find, by our own Experience, how difficult it is to keep our Minds long intent upon any thing, much more upon ſo great things, as the Object and Subject of our Prayers are; but do what we can, we are ſtill liable to Diſtractions: So that there is a kind of neceſſity to break off ſometimes, to give our ſelves a breathing time, that our Thoughts being looſned for a while, they may with more eaſe, and leſs danger of Diſtraction, be tyed up again, as it

is neceſſary they ſhould be, all the while that we are actually praying to the Supreme Being of the World.

Beſides that, in order to the performing our Devotions aright to the moſt High God, it is neceſſary that our Souls be poſſeſſed all along with due Apprehenſions of his Greatneſs and Glory. To which purpoſe our ſhort Prayers contribute very much: For every one of them beginning with ſome of the Properties or Perfections of God, and ſo ſuggeſting to our Minds right Apprehenſions of him at firſt, it is eaſie to preſerve them in our Minds during the ſpace of a ſhort Prayer, which in a long one would be apt to ſcatter and vaniſh away.

But that which I look upon as one of the principal Reaſons, why our publick Devotions are, and ſhould be divided into ſhort Collects is this: Our Bleſſed Saviour, we know, hath often told us, That whatſoever we ask in his Name, we ſhall receive: And ſo hath directed us in all our Prayers to make uſe of his Name, and to ask nothing but upon the account of his Merit and Mediation for us; upon which all our Hopes and Expectations from God do wholly and ſolely depend. Hence therefore, (as it always was, ſo) it cannot but be judged neceſſary, that the Name of Chriſt be frequently inſerted in our Prayers, that ſo we may lift up our Hearts unto him, and act our Faith upon him for our obtaining the good things we pray for. And ſo we ſee it is in the *Common-Prayer*, for whatſoever it is we ask of God, we preſently add, *Through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, or ſomething to that purpoſe. And ſo ask nothing but according to our Lord's Direction, even in his Name. And this is the reaſon that makes our Prayers ſo

ſo ſhort: for take away the Concluſion of every Collect or Prayer, *In the Name of Chriſt*, and you may joyn them all together, and make them but as one continued Prayer. But this would be to offer manifeſt Violence to the Prayers, by taking away that which gives them all their Force and Energy, and ſo making them ineffectual to the purpoſes for which they are uſed. For certainly the asking all things in the Name of Chriſt, as we do in the *Common-Prayer*, is the only way whereby to obtain what we deſire, and by conſequence, the moſt *Edifying Way* of Praying in the World.

The next thing to be conſider'd in the *Common-Prayer*, is the *Method*, which is admirable, and as *Edifying*, if poſſible, as the *Matter* it ſelf. This none can deny, that doth but fully underſtand, and ſeriouſly conſider of it. Which therefore, that you may all do, I ſhall briefly run through the whole, and give you what Light I can into it, that you may clearly ſee not only the Reaſonableneſs, but the Excellency of it all along. For which purpoſe I ſhall Inſtance only in ſuch things which offer themſelves at firſt ſight, to any one that doth but caſt his Eye upon it.

Let us therefore ſuppoſe a Congregation of ſober and devout Chriſtians (ſuch as we all ſhould be) met together to perform their publick Devotions to Almighty God: every one of which hath lift up his Heart privately unto him already, imploring his Aid and Aſſiſtance in the Performance of ſo great a Work, and ſo are all now ready to ſet about it. The firſt thing we do, is to Read ſome *Sentences* of Holy Scripture, that ſo we may begin our Devotions unto God in his own Words. And they are all ſuch *Sentences* as

Put us in mind of our ſins againſt him, and of his promiſe to pardon them if we do repent: That ſo we may preſent and carry our ſelves with that Reverence and Godly Fear before him as becometh thoſe who are ſenſible of their own Vileneſs and Unworthineſs to approach ſo Great a Majeſty: And likewiſe, with that Faith and humble Confidence, which becometh thoſe who believe, that he upon our Repentance will pardon our Sins, and accept both our Perſons and Performances, according to the Promiſes which he hath made unto us.

Then follows a grave *Exhortation*, concerning the end of our preſent Aſſembling, which is of great Uſe, and ought never to be omitted. For Men generally are apt to ruſh into the Preſence of God, without ever conſidering what they go about. Whereas, this *Exhortation* puts us upon conſidering the greatneſs of the Work which we are now ingaged in, and ſo upon compoſing our Thoughts, and preparing our ſelves for the due performance of it.

Our Minds being thus brought into a right Frame and Temper for it, we all, both Miniſter and People, proſtrate our ſelves before the moſt high God, *Confeſſing* upon our Knees, the manifold Sins and Wickedneſs that we have committed againſt him. Which *Confeſſion* is ſo contrived, that all, and every Perſon in any Congregation whatſoever, may join in it. For it runs in general Terms: And yet ſo too, that every particular Perſon may and ought in his own mind to confeſs and acknowledge his own Sins, which he knows himſelf to be guilty of. As where we ſay, *We have left undone thoſe things which we ought to have done, and we have done thoſe things which we ought not to have done.* At the ſaying of this

this every one ſhould call his own Sins to remembrance, and what Duties he knows himſelf to have omitted, and what Vices he knows himſelf to have committed, and confeſs them accordingly unto God. And when we have thus confeſſed our Sins to God, we preſently implore his Mercy in the pardon of them, and his Grace, that for the future we may forſake them.

And whilſt we are thus upon our Knees, humbly confeſſing and bewailing our Sins before the Lord our God, the Miniſter ſtands up, and in the Name of God, declares and pronounceth to all thoſe who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his Goſpel, *The Abſolution and Remiſſion of all their Sins.* Which though ſpoken alſo in general terms, yet every particular perſon there preſent, ought to apply it to himſelf, ſo as to be fully perſwaded in his own mind, that if he doth but ſincerely repent, and believe the Goſpel, he is perfectly abſolved from all his Sins by God himſelf, according to the Promiſes which he hath made to Mankind in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

And now looking upon our ſelves as *abſolved* from our Sins, upon our Repentance and Faith in Chriſt, and by conſequence, as reconciled to God, we take the boldneſs to call him Father, humbly addreſſing our ſelves to him in that Divine Form of Prayer which he himſelf hath given us. Which done, we lift up our Hearts and Voices unto God, for his aſſiſtance of us in what we do, in the words of *David*, the Miniſter crying out, *O Lord, open thou our Lips*, and the People anſwering, *And our Mouths ſhall ſhew forth thy Praiſe.* The Miniſter again, *O God, make ſpeed to ſave us*, the People, *O Lord, make haſte to help us.* And then immediately we all lift up our

Bodies to ſtand upon our Feet, and ſo put our ſelves into a Poſture of Praiſing and Magnifying the Eternal God, Father Son and Holy Ghoſt, for his infinite Goodneſs and Mercy towards us; for which purpoſe the Miniſter firſt ſaith, or ſings, the *Gloria Patri*, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt*; and the People to ſhew their conſent, anſwer, *As it was in the Beginning is now, and ever ſhall be, World without end*, Amen. But not thinking this to be enough, the Miniſter calls upon the People again, ſaying, *Praiſe ye the Lord*, and the People anſwer, *The Lord's Name be praiſed*; and then we go on to praiſe him together, ſaying, or ſinging, the Ninety fifth *Pſalm*, *Venite exultemus Domino*, *O come let us ſing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoyce in the ſtrength of our Salvation*, &c. And ſo proceed to the *Pſalms*, appointed for the Day. After every one of which, to teſtify our Belief in the moſt Sacred Trinity, and our acknowledgment of that Infinite Love and Goodneſs, which every one of thoſe Divine Perſons hath manifeſted to us, we repeat that incomparable Hymn, *Glory be to the Father*, &c.

Our Hearts being thus raiſed up to God in praiſing and admiring of him, we are now in a fit Temper and Diſpoſition to hear what he ſhall ſpeak unto us. And therefore have a Chapter read out of the *Old Teſtament*; and that in its ordinary courſe, except upon Sundays and Holy-days, when more people attending the publick Worſhip of God, than can conveniently come upon other days, we read ſome ſelect Chapter proper for the day and ſuch as is judged moſt edifying to all that are there preſent. And having thus heard God ſpeaking unto us in his Holy Word,

we

we presently fall upon praising of him again, for so unspeakable a Mercy, saying, or singing in the Morning, the *Te Deum*, one of the most Heavenly and Seraphick Hymns that was ever composed by Men: Or else, the *Song of the three Children*, which is nothing but a Paraphrase upon that which *David* sang so often upon Earth, and which the Holy Angels sing continually in Heaven, even *Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord.* Wherein we being all sensible how far short we our selves come of praising God sufficiently, we call upon all the Creatures of the World to do it, *Bless ye the Lord, praise him and magnify him for ever.* In the Afternoon, we sing either the *Magnificat*, or else the Ninety eighth *Psalm*, both which being taken out of God's own Word, cannot but be very pleasing and acceptable unto him.

After this, our Souls being got upon the Wing again, and soaring aloft in the Contemplation of the Divine Perfections, we are now rightly qualified to hear and receive the Sublime Mysteries of the Gospel. And therefore have a Chapter read to us out of the *New Testament.* After which we being revived with the good Tidings of the Gospel, and filled with admiration at the infinite Goodness of God therein revealed to us, we break forth again into Praising and Adoring of him, in the Song of *Zacharias*, or else the Hundredth *Psalm* in the Morning; and at Evening, either the Sixty seventh *Psalm*, or else the Song of Old *Simeon*, still concluding with *Gloria Patri.*

Now having thus heard some part of the Word of God read to us, and expressed our Thankfulness unto him for it, to signify our Assent, not only to what we have heard, but to the whole Scripture, we all with one Heart and Voice repeat

the *Apostles Creed*, wherein the Sum and Substance of it is contained. And so profess our selves to continue in the number of Christ's Disciples, and that as we were at first Baptized, so we still believe in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *God* Blessed for evermore.

Hitherto we have been mostly taken up with Confessing our Sins to *God*, imploring his Mercy in the Pardon of them, hearing his most Holy Word, acknowledging his Goodness to us, and praising and magnifying his Name for it. By which means, except we have been extreamly wanting to our selves, our Hearts cannot but be so united and fixed upon *God*, that we are now rightly disposed to make known our Wants, and present our Petitions before him. This therefore is the next thing we set upon: But seeing that neither Minister nor People can possibly do it aright, without the Assistance of *God* himself, therefore each of them first pray for his special Presence with the other. The one saying, *The Lord be with you*, the other, *And with thy Spirit*. And then immediately falling down upon our Knees, we Adore and Supplicate each Person of the most Blessed Trinity to have mercy upon us, *Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.* After which we Address our selves to *God* in the Words that he hath put into our Mouths, saying the *Lord's Prayer*; which ended, the Minister and People, by turns lift up their Hearts to *God* in some short and heavenly Ejaculations, striving as it were to outvy each other in prevailing with the Almighty to pour down his Blessings upon us. And then, in an humble and solemn manner, we join together in supplicating his Divine Majesty for his Grace and Favour, his Defence and Protection, his

Mercy and Bleſſing, for our ſelves, for the King, for the Royal Family, for his Church, and for all Mankind. And thus we do ordinarily in the Collects appointed for that purpoſe. But upon *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays* (upon which days the Primitive Church uſed to perform their more than ordinary Devotions) as alſo upon the *Lord's Day* in the Morning we do it in the *Litany*, and in ſuch a *Litany* as comprehends all, and every thing that we can ever need to deſire of *Almighty God*, either for our ſelves or others.

After this, upon Sundays and Holidays, we proceed to the *Communion Service*: And therefore, approaching to the Lord's Table, we begin it with his own Prayer. And after another ſhort Prayer to *God* to cleanſe the Thoughts of our Hearts by the Inſpiration of his Holy Spirit, we read the *Ten Commandments*, which he hath enjoyn'd us to obſerve; and after every Commandment we aſk *God* Mercy for our Tranſgreſſion thereof, for the time paſt, and Grace to keep the ſame for the time to come; ſaying, *Lord have Mercy upon us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.* And then, after a Prayer for the King, and the Collect for the day, we read the *Epiſtle* and *Goſpel*, that is, moſt commonly, a ſhort Paragraph taken out of the Canonical *Epiſtles*, and another out of one of the Holy *Goſpels*, which was the ancient way of reading the Scripture, before it was divided into Chapters. And we do it now to prepare us the better for the Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, therein revealed to us. But ſeeing we neither do, nor can read over the whole, we repeat the ſubſtance of it in the *Nicene Creed*, which it is very neceſſary we ſhould do at this time, that ſo we may demon-

ſtrate

ſtrate our ſelves to be Chriſtians, and ſo capable of receiving the moſt holy Communion.

He that all this while hath employed himſelf as he ought to do in the Service of our Church, cannot but find himſelf ſtrangely edified by it. Yet howſoever, that nothing may be wanting that may any way conduce to our Edification, after the *Nicene Creed*, our Church hath appointed a *Sermon* to be Preached, which if ſound, plain and practical, as it ought to be, cannot but be very edifying too.

And now we may be well ſuppoſed to be ſo far Edified, as to be raiſed up to the higheſt pitch of Devotion that we can arrive at in this World, and ſo are fit to be admitted to the higheſt Ordinance of the Church, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And therefore we now betake our ſelves to it. But that we may not appear before our Lord empty, we firſt offer up ſomething to him of what he hath beſtowed upon us, to be diſpoſed of to Pious and Charitable Uſes; teſtifying thereby our acknowledgment of his Goodneſs to us, and that we have nothing but what we receive from him. And to excite and encourage us to do this, all the while that we are offering, we have ſome ſelect Sentences of Scripture read to us, wherein God either commands us to be Charitable, or elſe promiſeth a Bleſſing to thoſe that are ſo. And then we pray *for Chriſt's whole Church Militant here on Earth*, whereby we profeſs our ſelves to be real Members of it, and deſirous to hold Communion with it in Chriſt's Myſtical Body and Blood. And ſo we proceed to the celebration of it; in which the *Method* is ſo clear, ſo apparently Edifying, that I need not ſay any thing of it. But ſhall only obſerve two things in General concerning it.

Firſt,

First, That the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, being the higheſt Myſtery in all our Religion, as Repreſenting the Death of the Son of God to us, hence that place where the Sacrament is Adminiſtred, was always made and reputed the higheſt place in the Church. And therefore alſo it was wont to be ſeparated from the reſt of the Church by a Skreen or Partition of Net-work, in Latin *Cancelli*, and that ſo generally, that from thence the place it ſelf is called the *Chancel*. That this was anciently obſerved in the Building of all conſiderable Churches (for I ſpeak not of private Oratories or Chapels) within few Centuries after the Apoſtles themſelves, even in the days of *Conſtantine* the Great as well as in all Ages ſince, I could eaſily demonſtrate from the Records of thoſe Times. But having purpoſely waved Antiquity hitherto, I am loath to trouble you with it now. But I mention it at preſent, only becauſe ſome perhaps may wonder why this ſhould be obſerved in our Church, rather than in all the other Churches which have been lately built in this City. Whereas they ſhould rather wonder, why it was not obſerved in all others as well as this. For beſides our Obligations to conform as much as may be to the Practice of the Univerſal Church, and to avoid Novelty and Singularity in all things relating to the Worſhip of God, it cannot be eaſily imagin'd, that the Catholick Church in all Ages and Places for 13 or 1400 Years together, ſhould obſerve ſuch a Cuſtom as this, except there were great Reaſons for it.

What they were, it is not neceſſary for us to enquire now. It may be ſufficient to obſerve at preſent, that the *Chancel* in our Chriſtian Churches

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was always looked upon, as anſwerable to the Holy of Holies in the Temple, which, you know, was ſeparated from the Sanctuary or Body of the Temple, by the Command of God himſelf. And that this place being appropriated to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it ought to be contrived, as may be moſt convenient for thoſe who are to partake of that Bleſſed Ordinance. But it muſt needs be more convenient for thoſe who are to enjoy Communion with Chriſt, and in him with one another, in this Holy Sacrament, to meet together, as one Body, in one Place, ſeparated for that purpoſe, than to be diſperſed, as otherwiſe they would be, ſome in one and ſome in another part of the Church. Or in ſhort, it is much better for the place to be ſeparate, than the People.

Furthermore, It is not only convenient, but in ſome ſenſe neceſſary, for every Communicant to obſerve and take ſpecial Notice of the ſeveral Circumſtances which our Lord hath ordained to be uſed in this Sacrament, as the Breaking of the Bread, and the Conſecrating both that and the Wine, to repreſent his Death, the breaking of his Body, and the ſhedding of his Blood for our Sins; that ſo our Hearts may be the more affected with it, and by conſequence our Souls more Edified by it. But this cannot be ſo well done, except there be a place ſet apart for it, where they may all be placed, about or near the Communion Table, and ſo behold what is there done at the Conſecration of the Elements. Hence alſo it is, that the Seats there, are and ought to be ſo ordered, that all that are in them may ſtill look that way, and contemplate upon their Bleſſed Saviour, there evidently ſet forth as crucified for them.

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The other thing that I would obſerve unto you concerning the Holy Communion, is this, that our Church requireth, or at leaſt ſuppoſeth it to be adminiſtred every Lord's day, and every Holy-day throughout the Year, as it was in the Primitive Church. For that is the Reaſon that the *Communion-Service* is appointed to be uſed upon all ſuch Days, and to be read at the Communion-Table, that ſo the Miniſter may be there ready to Adminiſter it unto all that deſire to partake of it. Which ſhews the great Care that our Church hath of all her Members, that they might be edified and confirmed in the Faith; to which nothing contributes more, than frequent Communion at our Lord's Table. Which if People could once be perſwaded to, they would ſoon find greater Benefit by it than I can expreſs, or they themſelves, till then, imagine. I ſhall ſay no more of it at preſent, but only this, That I am ſo ſenſible of what I now ſay, that could I be ſure to have a ſufficient number of Communicants, I ſhould be heartily glad to Adminiſter the Holy Sacrament every Lord's Day, both for their ſakes, and my own too.

Thus I have given you a ſhort Scheme of that Excellent Method wherein our Divine Service is performed; Which whoſoever rightly conſiders, will need no other Argument to convince him, that it is, according to the Apoſtle's Rule, very Edifying indeed. The laſt thing to be conſidered in it, is the Manner of its Performance; by which I mean only the ſeveral Poſtures of the Body, as ſtanding and kneeling, which are uſed in it: for they are alſo done to Edifying.

While we ſay or ſing the *Hymns* or *Pſalms* to the Praiſe and Glory of God, we ſtand up, not only to ſignifie, but to excite the Elevation of

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our Minds at that time. For as on the one hand, if our Souls be really lift up in the Praiſes of God, our Bodies will naturally lift up themſelves, to accompany them as far as they can towards Heaven; ſo on the other hand, the raiſing up of our Bodies helps towards the raiſing up of our Souls too, by putting us in mind of that High and Heavenly Work we are now about; wherein, according to our weak Capacities, we joyn with the Choire of Heaven in praiſing God now, as we hope to do it for evermore. For this cauſe alſo we ſtand at the Creeds, for they being Confeſſions of our Faith in God, as ſuch they come under the proper Notions of Hymns or Songs of Praiſe to him. All our praiſing God being really nothing elſe but our confeſſing and acknowledging him to be what he is in himſelf and to us. And beſides that, by our ſtanding at the Creeds and Goſpels, we ſignifie our aſſent unto them, and our readineſs to defend them, to the utmoſt of our Power, againſt all Oppoſition whatſoever. And as for the Goſpels particularly, they contain the very Acts which our Lord did, and the very Words which he ſpake when he was upon Earth; and therefore we who profeſs him to be our Lord and Maſter, cannot ſurely but ſtand up, when we hear him ſpeaking, and liſten diligently to thoſe gracious Words which proceed out of his Divine Mouth.

And as when we praiſe God, we raiſe up our ſelves as high as we can towards Heaven, ſo when we pray unto him, we fall down as low as we can towards the Earth, not daring to preſent our Supplications to the abſolute Monarch of the whole World, any other ways than upon our Knees. Which is ſo proper, ſo natural a Poſture of Supplicants, that if all Men would but duly conſider what

what they do when they pray to Almighty God, the Church need never have commanded them to kneel at that time. For they could not chooſe but do it: No, not although the place where they are, ſhould ſeem never ſo inconvenient for it. For we find our bleſſed Saviour himſelf kneeling at his Prayer in the Garden, upon the bare Ground, *Luke* 22. 41. and St. *Paul* upon the Sea-ſhore, where he could have no other Cuſhion but Stones or Sand, *Acts* 21. 5. Howſoever, to take off all thoſe little Excuſes that Men are apt to make for themſelves in this caſe, the Seats in this Church are ſo diſpoſed, and all things ſo prepar'd in them, that there can be no Inconvenience at all in it, but rather all the Conveniences for Kneeling that can be deſired. And therefore if any one of you ſhall neglect to kneel, while the Prayers are read, they will give us too much cauſe to call their Religion into Queſtion, or to ſuſpect they have none at all. For if they had, they durſt not, they could not offer ſuch a manifeſt Affront to the great Creator of the World, as to carry themſelves no otherwiſe while they pray to him, than as if they were converſing with their fellow Creatures. But why do I ſpeak of their praying unto God! It is too much to be feared they do not pray at all, nor come to Church for any better purpoſe, than only to ſee and be ſeen. I am ſure they perform no Act of external Worſhip of Adoration unto God, nor ſhew him that Reſpect and Reverence which is due unto him; and ſo give very great Offence to all pious and devout Chriſtians.

Whereas if all and every Perſon in the Congregation would always be upon their Knees, while they put up their Petitions to the moſt High God,

God, what a mighty Advantage would this be, not only to every one in particular, but to the whole Congregation in general? For as every one would by this means keep his Heart more stedfast in the true Fear and Dread of God, and likewise more certainly obtain the good things he prays for, as the Fathers frequently assert, so the whole Congregation also would be very much edified by it. For by this means we should excite and inflame each others Devotions, confirm and strengthen one anothers Faith, and convince both our selves and all that see us, that Religion is indeed a serious thing; and that we believe it to be so, by our serving God with so much Reverence and godly Fear, as this humble Posture representeth. And therefore as you tender the Love of God, the Credit of Religion, or the Salvation of your own Souls, I beseech you all, in the Name of him that made you, that whensoever you come hither to pray unto him, you do it in that awful, lowly, and solemn manner, which our Church commandeth, and as becometh Creatures, when you speak to your Great and Almighty Creator; that so you may give true Worship and Honour unto him, and also receive that Benefit and Edification to your selves, which he hath promised, and you expect from your publick Prayers, This being certainly the most Edifying Posture that you can possibly use upon such Occasions.

From what hath been hitherto discoursed concerning the Language, the Matter, the Method, and the Manner of performing Divine Service, as contained and prescribed in the Book of *Common-Prayer*; and may positively conclude, that it agrees exactly with the Rule in my Text, even that *All things in it are done to Edifying*: Which

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was the Thing I undertook to prove. I know that many other Arguments might be brought to ſhew the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of the *Common-Prayer*; but theſe already produced, are ſufficient to convince any ſober and conſidering Chriſtian of it. And if there be any here preſent, who are not yet convinced by what they have heard of it, I deſire only one thing of them, and that is, That they would but make Tryal of it for a while. For my Charity prompts me to believe, that all the Zeal that ſome expreſs againſt the *Common-Prayer*, and all that Indifferency that is in others for it, proceeds only from their Ignorance of what it is, or at leaſt from their want of an Experimental knowledge of it. For let any man that ſeriouſly minds the Worſhip of God, and the Salvation of his Soul, before all things elſe, let ſuch a one, I ſay, ſet himſelf in good earneſt to uſe the *Common-Prayer*, as he ought to do, for ſome conſiderable time, and I do not doubt but that by the Bleſſing of God, he will find that Benefit and Edification by it, that his own Experience ſhall convince him of all that I have now ſaid, more than all the Arguments that I have, or any Man in the World can ever produce to him. Some perhaps may think this to be a Paradox; but I do not queſtion but that many here preſent can atteſt it upon their own Knowledge; having found themſelves more confirmed in their Faith, more ſettled in their Religion, more humbled for their Sins, more ſupported under their Troubles, more inflamed with Love to God and Deſires of Heaven, every way more Edified by the conſtant uſe of the *Common-Prayer*, than they could ever have believed it poſſible to have been, except

they had found it to have been so by their own Experience.

Now these things being thus briefly considered, I shall observe only two things from them. The first is the extraordinary Prudence as well as Piety of our first Reformers, who first compiled the Book of *Common-Prayer*, so exactly conformable to the Word of God, and the Apostolical Canon in my Text; which I cannot but ascribe to the same extraordinary aid and assistance from God, whereby they were afterward inabled to suffer Persecution, yea, Martyrdom it self for his sake, and so to confirm what they have done with their own Blood. Which certainly is no small Commendation of it.

The other thing I would observe unto you, is the reason why the Devil hath had such a spight against the *Common-Prayer*, ever since it was first made. For the more edifying it is to God's People, the more Destructive it must needs be of the Devil's Kingdom. And therefore it is no wonder that he hath all along imployed the utmost of his power and policy to blast its Reputation, and so to discourage and diswade Men from the use of it. And by the permission of God for the Punishment of this ungrateful Nation, he hath so far prevailed in his Design, that the *Liturgy* hath been twice cast out of the Church since it was first brought into it, once in the Reign of Queen *Mary*, and then again in the days of King *Charles* the First.

In the Reign of Queen *Mary*, you all know, who were her Instruments in the doing of it, even the Papists. For they clearly and truly foresaw that their Erroneous Opinions could never be believed, nor Superstitious Practices observed in the Nation, so long as the *Common-Prayer* was used.

For as much as there is nothing in it but what is found and agreeable to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and so contrary to the groundless Opinions which the Church of *Rome* would obtrude upon the World for Articles of Faith. And besides that, there are many Expressions purposely inserted in it, to arm us against the Pope's Supremacy, Indulgences, Invocation of Saints, Transubstantiation, and other Popish Errors; so that it would have been impossible for the Romish Religion to be ever restored in the Nation, unless the *Common-Prayer* was first removed. Which therefore they took care to have done as soon as possible. But within a few Years after, even the First of Queen *Elizabeth*, it was brought in again. And as the Reformation was begun before, so from that time forward it was carried on and perfected chiefly by the means of *Common-Prayer*. For it is very observable, that in the Reign of King *Edward* the Sixth, and for several Years too of Queen *Elizabeth*, there was little or no Preaching in most parts of the Kingdom, and few then could read English, and yet by the constant and general use of the Liturgy, and God's Blessing upon it, the whole Nation was so edified in the True Religion, that there was scarce one in an Hundred but forsook and abhorred all Popish Doctrines and Superstitions: which is an undeniable Argument, that in this Respect also it is as edifying, as it is possible for a thing of that Nature to be. In so much that so long as the *Common-Prayer* is used and frequented as it ought to be, it is morally impossible for Popery to get any ground amongst us. But if this Bulwark was once removed (which God forbid) our grand Adversary would soon accomplish his malicious Designs upon us, one way or other.

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This he knows well enough, and therefore hath left no Stone unturned to effect it. But what he hath done before by the Papists, he afterwards brought about again by other means in the Reign of King *Charles* the First. For by what kind of Spirit the *Common-Prayer* was then cast out you all know, and some of you found by woful Experience. All that I shall say of it, is only this, that the same Spirit that then stirred up People so violently against the *Common-Prayer*, stirred them up at the same time to rebel against their King, to take away Mens Estates and Lives contrary to all Law and Justice; and at last to murther one of the most pious Princes that ever lived. And whether that was the Spirit of Christ or Antichrist, God or the Devil, judge you. Be sure the Consequences of its being laid aside at that Time were very sad. For People being deprived of that whereby they should have been Edified, were immediately tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine, until at length many of them fell into the most pernicious and damnable Heresies that were ever heard of in the Church. Yea, together with the Liturgy, they laid aside all Distinction betwixt sacred and common things; by which means the whole Nation was in danger of being overspread with Prophaneness and Irreligion.

But blessed be the Name of the most high God for it, he was once more pleased to appear for us, and in a miraculous manner to restore our *Common-Prayer* to his Church, together with our Gracious Sovereign to his Kingdoms. But what shall we render to the Lord for so great a Blessing as this is? All that he expects, or we can give him for it, is only to make the best use of it that we can. This therefore is that which I now pray and beseech you all for the future to do. Do not think it enough

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to be for the *Common-Prayer*, and to come now and then to hear it. This you may do, as many do, and yet receive no more benefit by it, than as if there were none at all to be received. Which therefore can by no means be imputed to the *Common-Prayer* it ſelf, but to the Negligence of thoſe that uſe it. Neither muſt you think it enough to talk high for it, or to rail at thoſe who are not ſo happy as to be rightly informed about it. But rather take all Opportunities to Inform them, and by all means poſſible to convince them of the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of it. Which you can never do ſo effectually, as by your out-ſtripping and exceeding them in Virtue and good Works. For this is, and ever will be a plain Demonſtration, that the *Common-Prayer* is indeed far more Edifying than thoſe New Modes of Religion, which they are ſo unhappily ſeduced into. That therefore you may do this, and ſo both experience in your ſelves, and demonſtrate unto others, the Truth and Certainty of what you have now heard concerning the *Common-Prayer*, I deſire you to obſerve theſe few Rules in the uſing of it.

Firſt, come not to our publick Prayers only out of Cuſtom, or for Faſhion ſake, as the manner of ſome is, but out of a ſincere Obedience to God's Commands, and with a ſure Truſt and Confidence in his Promiſes for his Bleſſing upon what you do. For which end it will be very good, as you go to Church, to bethink your ſelves whither you are going, and what you are to do there, that ſo laying aſide all other Buſineſs, you may put your ſelves into a right Temper for ſo great a Work.

Secondly, Frequent our publick Prayers as often as conveniently you can. The oftner you are at them, the better you will like them, and the more

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edify'd you will be by them. And therefore do not ſatisfie your ſelves with hearing them once a Week. In this City, as alſo in many other places of the Kingdom, eſpecially where there are Cathedrals, or Collegiate Churches, you may enjoy the benefit of them publickly every day, and ſo keep your Hearts continually in an holy and heavenly Frame, and always live as becometh Chriſtians: And if you neglect ſuch Opportunities as are now put into your Hands, you will one day wiſh you had not; but then wiſhing will do no good.

Thirdly, If poſſible, come always at the beginning of Divine Service. Otherwiſe you will certainly miſs of ſomething that would have been Edifying to you, and perhaps of that, which at that time might have done you more good than all the reſt. Neither will you loſe the Benefit only of part of it, but in ſome meaſure of the whole too; all the parts of it being linked together in ſo excellent a manner and method, that they influence and aſſiſt each other. So that nothing can be omitted either by Miniſter or People, but the whole will ſuffer by it, and loſe ſomething of that Virtue and Efficacy, which otherwiſe you will find in it.

Fourthly, all the while that you are in God's Houſe, carry your ſelf as in his ſpecial Preſence, and ſuitably to the work you are about: ſtanding while you praiſe God, and kneeling when you pray unto him, as our Church hath directed you. For though theſe may ſeem but little things in themſelves, yet they are of great conſequence, both to our Worſhipping of God aright, and to our being edified by what we do, as I have ſhewed before.

Laſtly, Take ſpecial care all along to keep your Minds intent upon the matter in hand; when you confeſs your Sins to God, do it with an hearty and ſincere

ſincere Repentance for all the Errors of your Life paſt. When the Abſolution is pronounced, receive it with a firm and ſtedfaſt Faith in Chriſt our Saviour. When you Repeat or Sing the *Hymns* and *Pſalms*, raiſe up your Spirits as high as you can, to joyn with thoſe above in praiſing and magnifying the Eternal God. When the Word of God is Read, hearken diligently unto it, and conſider ſeriouſly what he that made you, ſaith to you, and requireth of you, and reſolve by his Bleſſing to believe and live accordingly. And all the while that you are upon your Knees, putting up your Petitions to the moſt high God, let your whole Souls be imployed in it, earneſtly deſiring the good things you pray for at his gracious Hands, and humbly confiding on his faithful Promiſes for the granting of them. By this means you will perform reaſonable Service unto God, and by conſequence that which will be very acceptable unto him, and as profitable and edifying to your ſelves. Whereas they that do not obſerve this Rule, cannot be properly ſaid to pray, or ſerve God at all. And therefore it is no Wonder that they come to Churh and hear the *Common-Prayer* read, and yet are no way edified by it. Indeed it is impoſſible that they ſhould. For as much as all the Benefit and Edification that we can poſſibly receive from any of our Devotions, depends very much upon the due Intention of our Minds in the performance of them. To which, as I have ſhewn, both a Form of Prayer in general, and ours in particular, is a very great help.

Do but obſerve theſe plain and neceſſary Rules in uſing of the *Common-Prayer* (without which you cannot be truly ſaid to uſe, but rather to abuſe it) and you will ſoon find what I have ſaid about it to

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be true, even that *All things in it be done to Edifying*. And therefore I would to God, that not only you that hear me at this time, but all the People of the Nation, could be once perſwaded to do ſo. What an holy Nation, what a peculiar People ſhould we then become? How Pious towards God? How Loyal to our Sovereign? How Juſt and Charitable to one another? For by our conſtant Worſhipping Almighty God in ſo ſolemn and devout a manner as this is, our Hearts will be over-awed with ſo great a Fear of his Divine Majeſty, that we ſhould never dare willingly to offend him. Our Minds would be filled and impregnated with ſuch a ſenſe of his Power and Sovereignty, that we ſhould honour and reverence it in thoſe alſo whom he hath ſet over us. Our whole Souls would be raiſed up ſo much above the World, that we ſhould not do an ill Act to gain it wholly to our ſelves. In ſhort, We ſhould be every day Edified more and more in Faith, in Love, in Humility, in Self-denial, in Temperance, in Patience, in all true Grace and Vertue: And ſo we ſhould grow from Strength to Strength, from one degree of Grace unto another, until at length we arrive at Glory and Perfection in the Higheſt Heavens, where we ſhall ſpend Eternity it ſelf in Praiſing and Adoring the moſt high God; as for all the other Mercies which he hath vouchſafed to us, ſo in a particular manner for our being Members of ſuch an Apoſtolical Church, wherein all things are done to Edifying.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant we may all do, in and through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with the Father and Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory, World without end. *Amen.*

FINIS.